



**ETHNIC COUNCIL  
OF SHEPPARTON AND DISTRICT Inc.**

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Reg. No. A6321

## **Turkish Community Profile**



**September 2015**

# Country Background

## Official Name

Republic of Turkey

## Location

Turkey is a transcontinental Eurasian country. Asian Turkey, which includes 97 percent of the country, is separated from European Turkey by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles. European Turkey comprises 3 percent of the country. The territory of Turkey is more than 1,600 kilometres (1,000 mi) long and 800 km (500 mi) wide, with a roughly rectangular shape. It lies between latitudes 35° and 43° N, and longitudes 25° and 45° E. Turkey's area, including lakes, occupies 783,562 square kilometres (300,948 square miles), of which 755,688 square kilometres (291,773 square miles) are in Southwest Asia and 23,764 square kilometres (9,174 square miles) in Europe. Turkey is the world's 37th-largest country in terms of area. The country is encircled by seas on three sides: the Aegean Sea to the west, the Black Sea to the north and the Mediterranean to the south. Turkey also contains the Sea of Marmara in the northwest. <sup>1</sup>

## Population

In 1960, Turkey had a total population of 28.16 million people, and this number continues to gradually increase. In 1970, its population reached 35.46 million, and in 1980, it increased even more to become 44.11 million. In 1990, it rose to 54.13 million and then increased to 63.63 million by the year 2000. In 2010, the population was estimated to be 72.75 million, and now it is over 76 million. These statistical analyses show that without any fall or breakage the country's population kept growing from the 19th century till now:

The current population of Turkey is estimated at 75.8 million, and increase from 2013's estimate of 75.5 million, of which the male population is approximately 49.1% of the total population and the female population is 50.9% of the population. The population continues to increase at a steady rate with almost 3600 births every day, while the death rate compared to this is significantly low at 1224 deaths per day. This implies a net steady increase in Turkey's population – and it has increased by more than 150 percent over the years. The growth rate remains around 1.29% per year:

The population is fairly young with almost 27% ranging from 0 to 14 years of age, while 67% are 15 to 64 years old. Only around 6% are above 64 years of age. The largest city in Turkey is Istanbul, which has a total of 10.38 million people. The second largest city is Ankara, which is also the capital and has almost 3.86 million in population. There are many other major cities

in Turkey, but the most important and heavily populated ones include Izmir with 2.67 million, Bursa with 1.559 million and Adana with 1.339 million population.<sup>2</sup>

## **History**

The Anatolian peninsula, comprising most of modern Turkey, is one of the oldest permanently settled regions in the world. Various ancient Anatolian populations have lived in Anatolia, from at least the Neolithic period until the conquest of Alexander the Great. Many of these peoples spoke the Anatolian languages, a branch of the larger Indo-European language family. In fact, given the antiquity of the Indo-European Hittite and Luwian languages, some scholars have proposed Anatolia as the hypothetical center from which the Indo-European languages radiated. The European part of Turkey, called Eastern Thrace, has also been inhabited since at least forty thousand years ago, and is known to have been in the Neolithic era by about 6000 B.C. with its inhabitants starting the practice of agriculture.

Göbekli Tepe is the site of the oldest known man-made religious structure, a temple dating to 10,000 BC, while Çatalhöyük is a very large Neolithic and Chalcolithic settlement in southern Anatolia, which existed from approximately 7500 BC to 5700 BC. It is the largest and best-preserved Neolithic site found to date and in July 2012 was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The settlement of Troy started in the Neolithic Age and continued into the Iron Age.

The earliest recorded inhabitants of Anatolia were the Hattians and Hurrians, non-Indo-European peoples who inhabited central and eastern Anatolia, respectively, as early as ca. 2300 BC. Indo-European Hittites came to Anatolia and gradually absorbed the Hattians and Hurrians ca. 2000–1700 BC. The first major empire in the area was founded by the Hittites, from the 18th through the 13th century BC. The Assyrians conquered and settled parts of southeastern Turkey as early as 1950 BC until the year 612 BC. Urartu re-emerged in Assyrian inscriptions in the 9th century BC as a powerful northern rival of Assyria.

Following the collapse of the Hittite empire c. 1180 BC, the Phrygians, an Indo-European people, achieved ascendancy in Anatolia until their kingdom was destroyed by the Cimmerians in the 7th century BC. Starting from 714 BC, Urartu shared the same fate and dissolved in 590 BC, when it was conquered by the Medes. The most powerful of Phrygia's successor states were Lydia, Caria and Lycia.

Starting around 1200 BC, the coast of Anatolia was heavily settled by Aeolian and Ionian Greeks. Numerous important cities were founded by these colonists, such as Miletus, Ephesus, Smyrna and Byzantium, the latter founded by Greek colonists from Megara in 657 BC. The first state that was called Armenia by neighbouring peoples was the state of the Armenian Orontid dynasty, which included parts of eastern Turkey beginning in the 6th century

BC. In Northwest Turkey, the most significant tribal group in Thrace was the Odyrisians, founded by Teres I.

All of modern-day Turkey was conquered by the Persian Achaemenid Empire during the 6th century BC. The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, dates back to the Achaemenid rule in Anatolia. The territory of Turkey later fell to Alexander the Great in 334 BC, which led to increasing cultural homogeneity and Hellenization in the area. Following Alexander's death in 323 BC, Anatolia was subsequently divided into a number of small Hellenistic kingdoms, all of which became part of the Roman Republic by the mid-1st century BC. The process of Hellenization that began with Alexander's conquest accelerated under Roman rule, and by the early centuries AD the local Anatolian languages and cultures had become extinct, being largely replaced by ancient Greek language and culture.

In 324, Constantine I chose Byzantium to be the new capital of the Roman Empire, renaming it New Rome. Following the death of Theodosius I in 395 and the permanent division of the Roman Empire between his two sons, the city, which would popularly come to be known as Constantinople became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. This, which would later be branded by historians as the Byzantine Empire, ruled most of the territory of what is today Turkey until the Late Middle Ages, although much of the territory remained a playground where the frequent Byzantine-Sassanid Wars raged, until the first half of the 7th century.

The House of Seljuk was a branch of the Kınık Oğuz Turks who resided on the periphery of the Muslim world, in the Yabghu Khaganate of the Oğuz confederacy, to the north of the Caspian and Aral Seas, in the 9th century. In the 10th century, the Seljuks started migrating from their ancestral homeland into Persia, which became the administrative core of the Great Seljuk Empire.

In the latter half of the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks began penetrating into medieval Armenia and the eastern regions of Anatolia. In 1071, the Seljuks defeated the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert, starting the Turkification process in the area; the Turkish language and Islam were introduced to Armenia and Anatolia, gradually spreading throughout the region. The slow transition from a predominantly Christian and Greek-speaking Anatolia to a predominantly Muslim and Turkish-speaking one was underway. Alongside the Turkification of the territory, the culturally Persianized Seljuks set the basis for a Turko-Persian principal culture in Anatolia, which their eventual successors, the Ottomans would take over.

In 1243, the Seljuk armies were defeated by the Mongols, causing the Seljuk Empire's power to slowly disintegrate. In its wake, one of the Turkish principalities governed by Osman I would,

over the next 200 years, evolve into the Ottoman Empire. In 1453, the Ottomans completed their conquest of the Byzantine Empire by capturing its capital, Constantinople.

In 1514, Sultan Selim I (1512–1520) successfully expanded the empire's southern and eastern borders by defeating Shah Ismail I of the Safavid dynasty in the Battle of Chaldiran. In 1517, Selim I expanded Ottoman rule into Algeria and Egypt, and created a naval presence in the Red Sea. Subsequently, a competition started between the Ottoman and Portuguese empires to become the dominant sea power in the Indian Ocean, with a number of naval battles in the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The Portuguese presence in the Indian Ocean was perceived as a threat for the Ottoman monopoly over the ancient trading routes between East Asia and Western Europe (later collectively named the Silk Road). This important monopoly was increasingly compromised following the discovery of a sea route around Africa by Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias in 1488, which had a considerable impact on the Ottoman economy.

The Ottoman Empire's power and prestige peaked in the 16th and 17th centuries, particularly during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. The empire was often at odds with the Holy Roman Empire in its steady advance towards Central Europe through the Balkans and the southern part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. At sea, the Ottoman Navy contended with several Holy Leagues (composed primarily of Habsburg Spain, the Republic of Genoa, the Republic of Venice, the Knights of St. John, the Papal States, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Duchy of Savoy) for control of the Mediterranean Sea. In the east, the Ottomans were often at war with Safavid Persia over conflicts stemming from territorial disputes or religious differences between the 16th and 18th centuries. These wars were later continued as the Zand, Afsharid, and Qajar dynasties succeeded the Safavids in Iran, until the first half of the 19th century. From the 16th century till the early 20th century, the Ottomans and Russian Empire also fought many wars, initially about Ottoman territorial consolidation in southeastern Europe, but quickly already about mere Ottoman survival as an empire. Between the 16th and first half of the 19th century, the Ottomans, Persians, and Russians were all neighbouring rivals of each other.

From the beginning of the 19th century onwards, the Ottoman Empire began to decline. As it gradually shrank in size, military power and wealth, many Balkan Muslims migrated to the Empire's heartland in Anatolia, along with the Circassians fleeing the Russian conquest of the Caucasus. The decline of the Ottoman Empire led to a rise in nationalist sentiment among the various subject peoples, leading to increased ethnic tensions which occasionally burst into violence, such as the Hamidian massacres of Armenians.

The Ottoman Empire entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers and was ultimately defeated. During the war, the empire's Armenians were deported from Eastern Anatolia to

Syria as part of the Armenian Genocide. As a result, an estimated 1,500,000 Armenians were killed. The Turkish government denies that there was an Armenian Genocide and claims that Armenians were only relocated from the eastern war zone. Large-scale massacres were also committed against the empire's other minority groups such as the Assyrians and Greeks. Following the Armistice of Mudros on 30 October 1918, the victorious Allied Powers sought to partition the Ottoman state through the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres.

The occupation of Constantinople and Smyrna by the Allies in the aftermath of World War I prompted the establishment of the Turkish National Movement. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, a military commander who had distinguished himself during the Battle of Gallipoli, the Turkish War of Independence was waged with the aim of revoking the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres.

By 18 September 1922, the occupying armies were expelled, and the Ankara-based Turkish regime, which declared itself the legitimate government of the country in April 1920, started to formalize the legal transition from the old Ottoman into the new Republican political system. On 1 November 1922, the newly founded parliament formally abolished the Sultanate, thus ending 623 years of monarchical Ottoman rule. The Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923 led to the international recognition of the sovereignty of the newly formed "Republic of Turkey" as the continuing state of the Ottoman Empire, and the republic was officially proclaimed on 29 October 1923 in Ankara, the country's new capital. The Lausanne treaty stipulated a population exchange between Greece and Turkey, whereby 1.1 million Greeks left Turkey for Greece in exchange for 380,000 Muslims transferred from Greece to Turkey.

Mustafa Kemal became the republic's first President and subsequently introduced many radical reforms with the aim of transforming the old Ottoman-Turkish state into a new secular republic. With the Surname Law of 1934, the Turkish Parliament bestowed upon Mustafa Kemal the honorific surname "Atatürk" (Father of the Turks)

Turkey remained neutral during most of World War II, but entered the closing stages of the war on the side of the Allies on 23 February 1945. On 26 June 1945, Turkey became a charter member of the United Nations. Difficulties faced by Greece after the war in quelling a communist rebellion, along with demands by the Soviet Union for military bases in the Turkish Straits, prompted the United States to declare the Truman Doctrine in 1947. The doctrine enunciated American intentions to guarantee the security of Turkey and Greece, and resulted in large-scale U.S. military and economic support. Both countries were included in the Marshall Plan and OEEC for rebuilding European economies in 1948, and subsequently became founding members of the OECD in 1961.

After participating with the United Nations forces in the Korean War, Turkey joined NATO in 1952, becoming a bulwark against Soviet expansion into the Mediterranean. Following a decade of Cypriot intercommunal violence and the coup in Cyprus on 15 July 1974 staged by the EOKA B paramilitary organization, which overthrew President Makarios and installed the pro-Enosis (union with Greece) Nikos Sampson as dictator, Turkey invaded Cyprus on 20 July 1974. Nine years later the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is recognized only by Turkey, was established.

The single-party period ended in 1945. It was followed by a tumultuous transition to multiparty democracy over the next few decades, which was interrupted by military coups d'état in 1960, 1971, and 1980, as well as a military memorandum in 1997. In 1984, the PKK, a Kurdish separatist group, began an insurgency campaign against the Turkish government, which to date has claimed over 40,000 lives. Peace talks are ongoing. Since the liberalization of the Turkish economy during the 1980s, the country has enjoyed stronger economic growth and greater political stability. In 2013, widespread protests erupted in many Turkish provinces, sparked by a plan to demolish Gezi Park but growing into general anti-government dissent.<sup>1</sup>

## Ethnicity, language and religion

### **Ethnicity**

The population density of Turkey is 98 people per square kilometre. The population is mainly comprised of the Turkish people, who make up 75% of the total population, while Kurdish make up 18%. Other ethnic groups take up the remaining 17% of the total population.<sup>2</sup>

### **Language**

The languages spoken by the majority are Turkish and Kurdish, while minority groups speak other languages.<sup>2</sup>

### **Religion**

The main religion, followed by 99.8% of the population, is Islam, while other religions are followed by the minute .02% of the population.<sup>2</sup>

## Family Values

In rural areas especially, traditional family values prevail, and the father is the undisputed leader of the family. Members of large Turkish families, often living as an extended family, are loyal to the family unit. It is rare for a person to live alone, mostly for economic reasons, however particularly young generation prefers to do so. Polygamy, though banned in 1920s, may be illegally available in rural areas. Women gained the right to vote in 1927 and the right to divorce in 1934, when civil codes were introduced. Many women in urban areas work outside the home in the fields. An estimated 38 per cent of labour force (1995) is female. In rural areas, families usually decide on whom a person will marry, but in urban areas the choice is generally that of the couple. A marriage is not permitted for women before the age of 15, and men before the age of 17. In cities, many wait until their education, and sometimes military service, have been completed before getting married. The average age for marriage is 24 for women and 26 for men. Most Turks expect to marry and have children. Traditional wedding celebrations, although increasingly rare, last three days. They begin with the henna evening usually on Friday, called "kına gecesi", which is an event for women only. The women decorate the hands and fingers of the bride with henna-leaf dye, and dance and sing together. On the second day, both sets of parents serve lunch and dinner to their guests. On the third day, the bride is taken to the groom's home on a horse after folk dances are performed. <sup>3</sup>

## Education and Economy

### Education

The Ministry of National Education is responsible for pre-tertiary education. This is compulsory and lasts twelve years: four years each of primary school, middle school and high school. Less than half of 25-34 year old Turks have completed at least high school, compared with an OECD average of over 80 percent. Basic education in Turkey is considered to lag behind other OECD countries, with significant differences between high and low performers. Turkey is ranked 32nd out of 34 in the OECD's PISA study. Access to high-quality school heavily depends on the performance in the secondary school entrance exams, to the point that some students begin taking private tutoring classes when they are 10 years old. The overall adult literacy rate in 2011 was 94.1 percent; 97.9 percent for males and 90.3 percent for females.

By 2011, there were 166 universities in Turkey. Entry to higher education depends on the Student Selection Examination (ÖSS). In 2008, the quota of admitted students was 600,000, compared to 1,700,000 who took the ÖSS exam in 2007. Except for the Open Education Faculty (Turkish: Açıköğretim Fakültesi) at Anadolu University, entrance is regulated by the



national ÖSS examination, after which high school graduates are assigned to universities according to their performance. According to the 2012–2013 Times Higher Education World University Rankings, the top university in Turkey is Middle East Technical University (in the 201–225 rank range), followed by Bilkent University and Koç University (both in the 226–250 range), Istanbul Technical University and Boğaziçi University (in the 276-300 bracket).<sup>1</sup>

## **Economy**

Turkey has the world's 17th largest GDP by PPP and 18th largest nominal GDP. The country is among the founding members of the OECD and the G-20 major economies.

The EU – Turkey Customs Union in 1995 led to an extensive liberalization of tariff rates, and forms one of the most important pillars of Turkey's foreign trade policy. Turkey's exports were \$143.5 billion in 2011 and reached \$163 billion in 2012 (main export partners in 2012: Germany 8.6%, Iraq 7.1%, Iran 6.5%, UK 5.7% and UAE 5.4%). However, larger imports which amounted to \$229 billion in 2012 threatened the balance of trade (main import partners in 2012: Russia 11.3%, Germany 9%, China 9%, US 6%, Italy 5.6%).

Turkey has a sizeable automotive industry, which produced over a million motor vehicles in 2012, ranking as the 17th largest producer in the world. Turkish shipbuilding exports were worth US\$1.2 billion in 2011. The major export markets are Malta, Marshall Islands, Panama and the United Kingdom. Turkish shipyards have 15 floating docks of different sizes and one dry dock. Tuzla, Yalova, and İzmit have developed into dynamic shipbuilding centres. In 2011, there were 70 active shipyards in Turkey, with another 56 being built. Turkish shipyards are highly regarded both for the production of chemical and oil tankers up to 10,000 dwt and also for their mega yachts.

Turkish brands like Beko and Vestel are among the largest producers of consumer electronics and home appliances in Europe, and invest a substantial amount of funds for research and development in new technologies related to these fields.

Other key sectors of the Turkish economy are banking, construction, home appliances, electronics, textiles, oil refining, petrochemical products, food, mining, iron and steel, and machine industry. In 2010, the agricultural sector accounted for 9 percent of GDP, while the industrial sector accounted for 26 percent and the services sector for 65 percent. However, agriculture still accounted for a quarter of employment. In 2004, it was estimated that 46 percent of total disposable income was received by the top 20 percent of income earners, while the lowest 20 percent received only 6 percent. The rate of female employment in Turkey was 30 percent in 2012, the lowest among all OECD countries.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) was \$8.3 billion in 2012, a figure expected to rise to \$15 billion in 2013. In 2012, Fitch Group upgraded Turkey's credit rating to investment grade after an 18-year gap; this was followed by a ratings upgrade by Moody's in May 2013, as the service lifted Turkey's government bond ratings to the lowest investment grade Baa3.<sup>1</sup>

## Turkish in Australia

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were about 20 Ottoman Empire -born people in Australia. The number increased to 300 by the 1911 Census and remained low after the World War II. By 1966, the number had reached 2500.

In 1967, Australia and Turkey signed a bilateral agreement on assisted migration. This was an important step towards the easing of immigration restrictions. The Turkish represented the first 'Asian' migrants to settle in Australia on a large scale since 1901. They were also the first large Muslim population to settle in Australia.

In the initial years of the agreement, the majority of Turkish immigrants were unskilled and found employment as labourers and process workers in the manufacturing sector. There was an increase in Turkey-born nationals in Australia to 11 589 in the 1971 Census.

Immigration from Turkey to Australia declined in the first half of the 1980s but then resumed in the second half due to high inflation and unemployment in Turkey. Since then, migration from Turkey has declined, with most arriving under the Family Stream of the migration program with smaller numbers as general skilled migrants.<sup>4</sup>

# The Turkish Community in Shepparton

## ***Population***

Turkish community began to establish in Shepparton since 1970's.

In September 2015 the Turkish community in Shepparton comprises about 600 families totalling approximately 2,500 people.

## ***Language & Religion***

Almost everyone in Turkish community speaks Turkish and the new generation speaks both Turkish and English. The main religion is Islam and it is the only faith in the community.

## ***Education***

Younger generation in the Turkish community has a post –secondary education and the other members of the community have at least primary or secondary education.

## ***Employment***

Working population of Shepparton Turkish community is predominantly in the Agriculture industry. Others are business owners and work in various industries.

## Issues

There are a few issues identified in the Shepparton Turkish community according to their leadership group.

It has been highlighted that there is a need for youth focused activities and educations programs (skill based) to support and engage younger generation since there are some concerns of drug and alcohol related incidents.

Turkish community established their Turkish Islamic Cultural Centre in 1985 which is their primary location for religious, social and cultural gatherings.

The mosque possesses a vacant land and Turkish community is considering to attract funding to establish a community centre/facility for young people.

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1 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey>

2 <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/turkey-population/>

3 <http://www.venividittravel.com/turkey/turkishculture.html>

4 [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/02\\_2014/turkey.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/02_2014/turkey.pdf)